Committee of that Ministry and out of the total amount proposed *i.e.* Rs. 18.90 crores an amount of Rs. 4.50 crore as Central share was approved and two installments of Rs. 1.00 crore each were released on 20th February, 2001 and 25th June, 2003. Screening of proposals for Panchayati Raj Training is now being looked after by the Training and Research Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The Madhya Pradesh Government has been asked by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to furnish the utilization certificate and item-wise statement of accounts of amount released so far and to report on the physical progress of training programmes organized out of the grant/ funds released. The State Government has also been asked to confirm whether it has released its share of the cost of the training. On receipt of their reply the decision with regard to release of next installment of Central share will be taken.

Tapping of new sources of oil

2882. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a fresh strategy has been drawn to explore the possibility of tapping new sources of oil available in different regions of the world;

(b) if so, the details thereof and their present status;

(c) whether the economics of contracting oil supplies from Venezuela has been studied; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, including the prospects/feasibility of trading in such oil with other countries in the adjoining regions and to exchange/ buy other goods, equipments etc. from those countries or elsewhere, which supplement the country's needs?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Public Sector Oil Companies explore the possibility of tapping new sources of crude supply from different regions of the world on a continuous basis, particularly the Gulf, North Africa, West Africa and the Far East, and grades which are identified as suitable are imported subject to economic viability.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Although there are complexities in processing Venezuelan crude in Indian refineries owing to heavy bottom, high sulphur content and higher freight as compared to alternative crudes.available from the Gulf and elsewhere, Venezuelan crude is on the BPCL approved list and would be imported, subject to economic viability. The range of Venezuelan crudes and the possibilities of dilution are under examination. Swap arrangements are also possible. An important component of energy security is the diversification of imports. It is in this context that crude oil imports from Venezuela are being considered, in addition to present and potential sources of supply.

Export of petroleum products

†2883. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the export of petroleum products during the first 11 months of 2004-05 has shown 24.8 per cent increase as compared to the first 11 months of the last year;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) the details of the petroleum products which have been exported alongwith the quantity thereof; and

(d) the average sale price rate determined with respect to each product?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The export of petroleum products during the first 11 months of 2004-05 has shown an increase of 24.9% in volume terms as compared to the same period of last year. While 12,927 TMT of petroleum products were exported during the first 11 months of 2003-04, the export during the same period of 2004-05 amounted to 16,139 TMT.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.